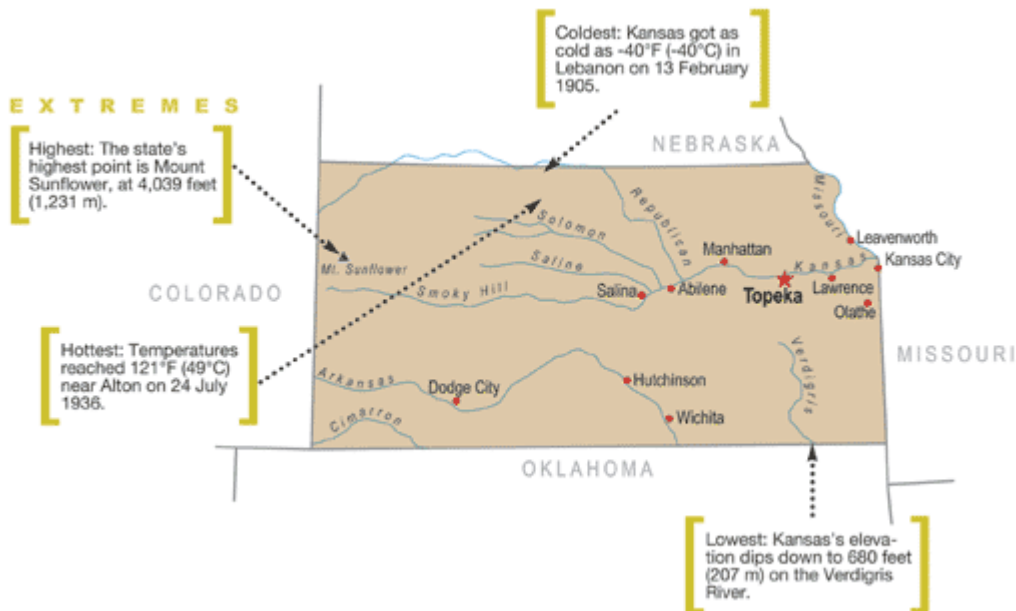




The Sunflower State

Established 1861

34th State

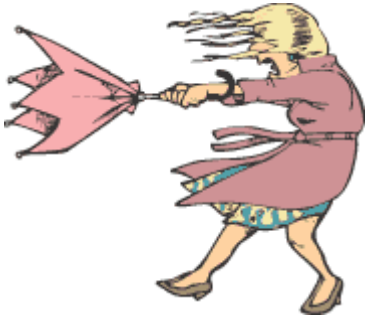


Did You Know?

- The world's largest collection of space suits is found at the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center in Hutchinson.
- Dorothy's house from *The Wizard of Oz* is on display in Liberal.
- "Home on the Range" is the Kansas state song.
- In 1887, Susanna Salter of Argonia became the nation's first woman mayor.
- Cawker City claims to have the world's largest ball of twine. The ball has more than 1,325 miles (2,132 km) of twine and weighs close to 17,554 pounds (7,962 kg)! It was started in 1953, and the residents of Cawker City add to it each year.
- The word *Kansas* comes from a Kansa word meaning "people of the south wind."
- Besides the Sunflower State, Kansas is also called the Wheat State, the Cyclone State, and the Jayhawker State.
- The first Kansas newspaper was written in the Shawnee language.
- The largest hailstone in the United States fell at Coffeyville on 3 September 1970. It was about 18 inches (45 cm) in circumference.

The Place

Climate



Kansas experiences wide swings in temperature from season to season. The summers are hot, and winters are very cold. The average summer temperature is 79°F (26°C), while the average winter temperature is 30°F (-1°C). Kansas gets 14 inches (36 cm) of snow per year. High winds, thunderstorms, and tornadoes are common in spring and summer. Every few years, Kansas suffers a drought. These dry spells can ruin farm crops and damage the state's economy.

Geography

A large area of flat grasslands called the Great Plains covers much of Kansas. That does not mean that all of Kansas is flat. The state's elevation slowly rises from lowlands in the east to high plains in the west. The Flint Hills in the southeast have beautiful limestone ridges. In the northeast, rivers have created high bluffs. Chalk beds and unique rock formations are scattered throughout the central part of the state. Kansas has 82,282 square miles (213,109 sq km), making it the 15th largest state.

Resources and Economy




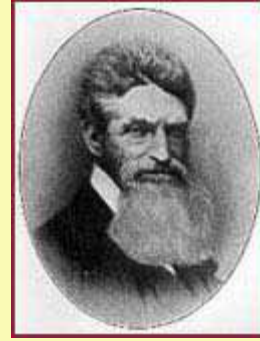
Kansas makes many people think of large herds of cattle and rolling fields of wheat. These are the industries that built the Kansas economy more than a century ago, and they are still important to Kansans today. Beef is the state's most valuable farm product, and Kansas is one of the nation's leaders in wheat production. While relying on these traditional industries, the economy has also expanded into other areas. Today, manufacturing is the biggest part of Kansas's economy, and aircraft are its leading manufactured products. Kansas is the nation's number one state in making general aviation aircraft. Wichita is called the Air Capital of the World. Several major aircraft companies have manufacturing facilities in Kansas, including Boeing, one of the largest aircraft manufacturers in the world. It makes commercial jets, military planes, and NASA aircraft. So while Kansas keeps its roots

from the past, it is also on the cutting edge of technology.

History

Time Line

Thousands of years ago, Native Americans begin to inhabit Kansas	
A.D. 1500	
A.D. 1500s	The Wichita, Pawnee, Osage, Kansa, and Kiowa tribes live in Kansas
1541	Coronado becomes the first European to reach Kansas
1600	
1682	La Salle claims Kansas as part of the French territory in the New World
1800	
1803	Napoleon sells the Louisiana Territory
	
1804	Lewis and Clark pass through Kansas
1806	Zebulon Pike explores Kansas
1830	The U.S. government begins relocating Native Americans to Kansas
1854	The Kansas-Nebraska Act is passed, and Kansas becomes a territory
1856	John Brown avenges the destruction of the <i>abolitionist</i> (anti-slavery) town of Lawrence



1861

Kansas becomes a state; the Civil War begins



1862

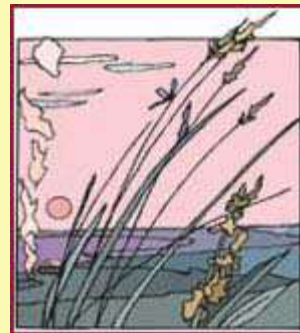
The Homestead Act is passed, allowing anyone to file for 160 acres of free land if they are willing to make certain improvements to the property

1863

A Civil War battle takes place at Lawrence

1874

Russian Mennonites introduce a new strain of wheat to Kansas



1878

Kansas's last Native American raid takes place

1870s-'80s

Millions of cattle are brought through Kansas's cow towns

1900

1930s

The Kansas Dust Bowl and the Great Depression occur



1954

The U.S. Supreme Court rules on *Brown v. Board of Education*

PRESENT

The First European Contact



Native American people lived in what is now Kansas long before Europeans arrived. The Wichita, Osage, Kansa, Pawnee, Kiowa, and other tribes grew crops on the Kansas plains. In 1541, Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado became the first European to reach Kansas. He was looking for legendary cities of gold, but he only found Native American villages.

The French Years

More than one hundred years later, René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, sailed down the Mississippi and claimed a large portion of North America for France. French fur trappers exchanged goods with Native Americans and built trading posts in northeast Kansas. French influence lasted until 1803, when France sold a big piece of land, including Kansas, to the United States. This was known as the Louisiana Purchase. Explorers such as Zebulon Pike and Major Stephen Long investigated the new American territory, but most early explorers thought that much of Kansas was a desert where no one would want to live.

New Arrivals

Because of the explorers' reports, U.S. leaders thought no settlers would want to move to Kansas. They set it aside as a place to relocate Native American tribes. During the same time, settlers passed through Kansas going westward on the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail. They could see that the explorers' reports were wrong and that Kansas really wasn't a bad place. By 1850, many settlers were staying permanently. Life was often hard for them. Droughts made farming difficult. Also, until 1878, Native Americans raided white settlements because they were upset about treaties the government had broken.

Bleeding Kansas

The issue of slavery divided the nation in the 1850s. The Northern states were against slavery, and the Southern states supported it. An important question was whether new states like Kansas would allow slavery. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 stated that Kansans could decide the issue for themselves. People began moving into the Kansas Territory from both the North and the South. Each side wanted to fill Kansas with

people who supported their position on slavery. Sometimes the arguments became violent. This gave the territory the nickname Bleeding Kansas. People from proslavery Missouri attacked Kansas's *abolitionists*, (people against slavery). An abolitionist named John Brown got revenge by killing several proslavery settlers. He became a hero to many in the North. Kansas finally became a free state in January of 1861, but the Civil War began that April. Thousands of Kansans died in this war.

Years of Prosperity



Two arrivals changed the face of Kansas: cattle and wheat. When the railroad reached Kansas, booming "cow towns" sprang up as cowboys drove their cattle to Abilene, Dodge City, and Wichita for shipment to the east. The cow towns earned reputations as being rowdy and lawless places, where sheriffs like Wyatt Earp fought to keep order. In 1874, a group of Russian *Mennonites* (a religious group) brought a new kind of wheat to Kansas. This crop was perfectly suited for Kansas's conditions, and it soon formed the basis for the Kansas economy. Although terrible droughts during the 1930s hurt the state, Kansas grew into the agricultural powerhouse it is today.

Brown v. Board of Education

The 1950s put Kansas in the national spotlight. A black girl named Linda Brown tried to attend an all-white school in Topeka. When she wasn't allowed in, her father sued the Topeka Board of Education. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which decided it was illegal for public schools to be segregated by race. Because of this decision, American schools soon became multiracial.

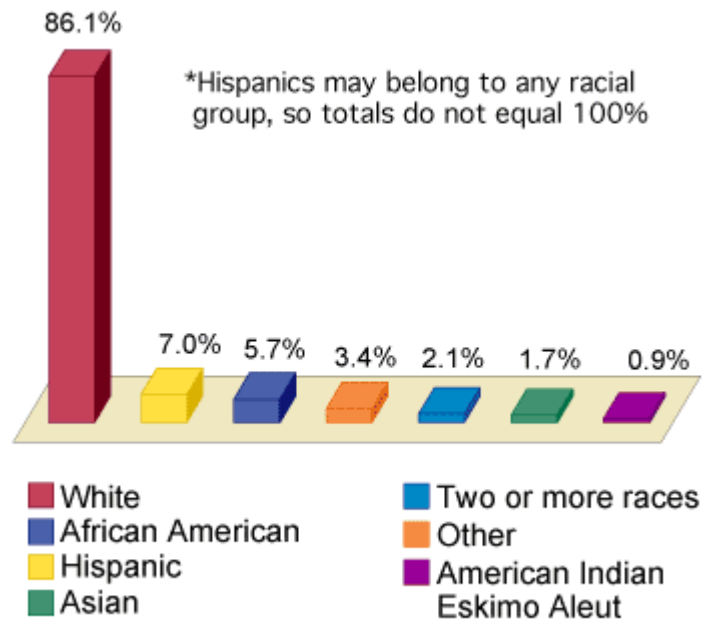
The People

Population

Kansas has a low *population density*, or number of people compared to the area of land. There are only 33 people per square mile (13 per sq km) in Kansas. One-third of Kansans live in rural areas. The other two-thirds live in cities that are concentrated in the eastern part of the state. Most Kansans can trace their ancestry back to early immigrants from the eastern United States and from Europe. African-Americans later

found their way to Kansas and make up almost 6 percent of the population today.

Total Population: 2,723,507



Government

Capital: Topeka

U.S. Senators: 2

U.S. Representatives: 4

Counties: 105

- A 1933 law makes sure that the state cannot spend any money it has not raised.
- Because Kansas has two U.S. senators and four U.S. representatives, the state gets a total of six electoral votes in presidential elections.

Famous People

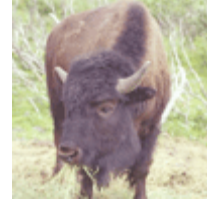
- *Amelia Earhart* — First female pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic
- *Bob Dole* — U.S. senator, congressman, and presidential candidate
- *Carry A. Nation* — Activist who worked to enforce laws against alcohol consumption
- *Dwight D. Eisenhower* — World War II general and 34th U.S. president
- *Edgar Lee Masters* — Novelist and poet
- *Gale Sayers* — Football star for the University of Kansas and the Chicago Bears
- *Walter Johnson* — Baseball pitcher
- *William Inge* — Screenwriter and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright
- *Wilt Chamberlain* — Professional basketball player from the University of Kansas

Fun Facts & Contacts

State Symbols

State Animal

American bison—These large mammals once roamed the Kansas plains.



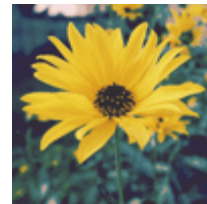
State Bird

Western meadowlark—This bird is known for its beautiful whistle.



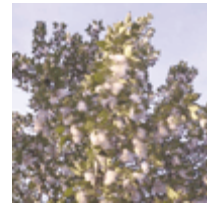
State Flower

Native sunflower—This flower of the plains can be seen at the top of the state flag.



State Tree

Cottonwood—The state's largest cottonwood is 111 feet (43 m) tall.



Cultural Note



Kansans have produced art in many different forms. Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote about life on the frontier in her popular *Little House on the Prairie* books. Saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker grew up in Kansas City and became one of the world's greatest jazz musicians. Stan Herd is known as a crop artist. He uses fields as giant canvases to create pictures that can be seen from the air. Herd's crop art shows the close relationship that many Kansans have with the land.

For More Information

See www.accesskansas.org or contact the Travel and Tourism Development Division, 700 Southwest Harrison Street, Suite 1300, Topeka, KS 66603; phone (800) 2-KANSAS; web site www.travelks.com.

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